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P 291003Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5218  
INFO RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1510  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 4241  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3472  
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0203  
RUEHKKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1902  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5751  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2351  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9289  
RUEHB1/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 3295  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 5882  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7561  
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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: OBAMA PRESIDENCY, GUANTANAMO:  
DETAINEE POLICY; NEW DELHI.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press. The Mission reports on English-language media via email through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

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OBAMA PRESIDENCY  
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[¶1.](#) "POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP," editorial in the January 28 pro-Congress Party HINDUSTAN Hindi daily: "All of the following happened at the same time: U.S. President Barack Obama said in his message on Republic Day that the U.S. is India's best friend -- the message had a very personal touch; secondly, Vice President Joe Biden said that the U.S. would launch attacks within Pakistan if it had intelligence on high level al-Qaeda operatives; and thirdly, terror aid to Pakistan has been cut. It is loud and clear that the U.S. policy for the Indian subcontinent is rapidly changing... the role that the U.S. had given Pakistan during the cold war has been taken away. Now the latter can only play a role of eradicating terrorism. The U.S. needs India for long-term and wide-ranging interests, but it only needs Pakistan for immediate needs, and only for uprooting terrorism. We can also call it the success of our foreign policy -- Pakistan is trapped now."

[¶2.](#) "U.S. MESSAGE," editorial in the January 28 nationalist RASHTRIYA SAHARA Hindi daily: "U.S. President Barak Obama and Vice President Joe Biden's anti-Pakistan and pro-

India attitude toward terrorism on Republic Day is a sign of a change in the U.S.' South Asia policy. Obama's call to work jointly to deal with the obstacles in the way of shared U.S. and Indian values has a serious meaning.

Similarly, Biden's comments on launching attacks to destroy terrorist networks in Pakistan is also a clear indication of a new American approach. This shows the desire to actively manifest U.S.-Indian multilateral relations and strategic partnership. Obama-Biden's aggressive attitude seems to be far ahead the Bush administration on terrorism. In fact, the Obama administration is working on the strategy of finalizing the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. The U.S. policy, indeed, is a relief for India. The attack on Pakistan-based terrorist networks will automatically reduce the threat to India."

¶3. "SOLACE TO THE MUSLIM WORLD" editorial in the January 29, 2009, Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily MAHARASHTRA TIMES. "At the very beginning of his White House tenure, President Obama has made it clear that America will be friendly to the Muslim world. Obama's clear-cut call for cooperation is welcome and necessary. The Muslim world has been alienated for a long time. Ordinary people living in Muslim countries are insecure. Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, did his best to aggravate this insecurity. Far from serving the cause of world peace, Bush's failed missions in Iraq and Afghanistan jeopardized the interests of the people of these countries, predominantly Muslims. Bush's fight

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against terror was as dreadful as the 9/11 terrorist attack executed by Osama bin Laden against the U.S. Bush did immense harm to the U.S. image in the Muslim world, thereby making it almost obligatory for Obama to make a concerted effort to win over Muslims."

¶4. "TRUSTWORTHY INITIATIVES" editorial in the January 29, 2009, Mumbai edition of centrist Marathi daily NAVASHAKTI. "President Obama's interview on the Al-Arabiya television network demonstrated his intention to deploy effective out-of-the-box strategies to fight terror. His resolve to reinstate normalized friendly relations with the Muslim world also comes across very clearly in the interview. In fact, his statement about restoring 'the same respect and partnership that America had with the Muslim world as recently as 20 or 30 years ago' is quite revolutionary. His interview indicates an open-mind which acknowledges America's past errors of judgment and makes a renewed effort to reach out to the rest of the world."

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GUANTANAMO: DETAINEE POLICY

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¶5. "GUANTANAMO BAY, OBAMA AND EUROPE", editorial in the January 28 right-of-center Urdu daily HINDUSTAN EXPRESS, New Delhi: "Severe differences surfaced between America and its allies on the proposal to shut the detainee camp at Guantanamo Bay. America, the flag-bearer of democracy, liberty and human rights, America, the country of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln has also adopted the torture techniques of Hitler and those of the Zionist regime. And the European countries followed in the footsteps of Uncle Sam blindly. When Bush was massacring innocent human beings, these voice-raisers were silent, but they are restless when President Barack Hussain Obama orders the closure of the camp within a year. The tragic aspect of this incident is that these countries are avoiding accepting these detainees. According to the President of the European Union, closure of this camp is not an easy matter. Do they want these detainees to take shelter in the U.S and play into the hands of the CIA as usual?"

16. "DETAINEES IN GUANTANAMO BAY AND PRESIDENT OBAMA", editorial in the January 28 right-of-center Urdu daily MUNSIF, Hyderabad: "Post 9/11, America's war against terrorism is based on frivolous and baseless assumptions which America can not prove as yet. On the other hand, it is America itself that committed most crimes before and after 9/11. On the long list of crimes committed by America is the Guantanamo Bay prison. America claimed that detainees are the deadliest terrorists. Most heinous violations of human rights have been made there. It is the demand of justice that allegations against these detainees should be investigated, and detainees apprehended on the basis of mere assumptions be released. But the question is whether Obama will be able to deviate from the defined strategy and modus operandi. For this, he will have to accept the wrongs committed in the past.

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He will have to admit the fabrications made on the websites and video tapes depicting the dreaded image of al-Qaeda. In a nutshell, if Obama is sincere in doing away with the injustice of the past, he will have to deal with the matter with courage and the determination to go against the interests of Israel. Else apprehensions about Obama may prove true."

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